



Maintenance Guidelines for Timber Windows.



Windows and doors produced by members of the Wood Window Alliance are designed and manufactured using the best available materials and techniques to produce high performance, low maintenance products with a long service life.

Windows within the Wood Window Alliance scheme are delivered to site fully finished – coated, glazed and fitted with hardware in controlled factory conditions. Other windows may be available as joinery items supplied with a primer or stain base coat for site glazing and finishing. It is always advisable to choose factory-finished windows and doors where possible.

These guidelines will help to ensure the performance and good looks of your windows for their expected service life of 60 years.

Where your window supplier has provided specific maintenance requirements for their products, their information should be followed in preference to the guidance in this document.

1. General care

Simple steps such as wiping down the joinery finish to remove dirt and insects will help extend the decorative finish. Ask your window cleaner to do this at the same time as cleaning the glass.

Good household maintenance also helps to extend repainting intervals. At least once a year:

- Check hinges and handles and treat with a light oil if necessary
- Clean weather seals and ventilators to remove dust or grime
- In autumn, clear guttering and down pipes, and repair any leaks
- Each spring, inspect the joinery and spot repair any minor areas of coating damage, shakes or open joints.

2. Redecoration

All areas to be re-coated should be lightly abraded with a fine grade abrasive paper, washed down with a mild detergent solution and rinsed with clean water to remove dust, insects and other contaminants that can form a base for algae and fungi growth.

Using a good quality, long-haired, synthetic brush, designed for use with acrylic paints, apply one or two coats of water-based opaque or translucent topcoat in the appropriate shade, colour and gloss level. Allow to dry for four hours between coats.

3. Applying water-based paints

The short drying time and reduced flow of water-based paints require a specific technique to achieve a good finish:

- A long-haired synthetic brush will give best results. Avoid short-haired or worn brushes, which may leave lines
- Wet the brush thoroughly with water before starting, ensuring the base of the bristles is fully wetted
- Thinning with 5-10% of water will improve the flow and leveling properties, particularly in warmer weather
- Load the coating generously onto the surface and disperse the paint briskly
- Even out the coating with light diagonal cross strokes - **do not overbrush** - the coating will flow and level naturally
- Avoid painting any seals
- Finish the application with light brush strokes in the direction of the grain
- If there's any paint on the glass, allow to dry. Take care to avoid scratching the glass by wetting the area first and using a professional scraper.

With practice, an even coat can be applied quickly. An even coating film is important for durability, but also for appearance, particularly in the case of translucent wood stain.

Apply and finish each section systematically, one component at a time (e.g. top rail followed by the style and then the bottom rail).



When applying darker opaque colours over previously applied lighter shades, use a base coat of the final colour to aid opacity.

Do not attempt to paint when the temperature is below 5 degrees Celsius, or if the relative humidity exceeds 80% as the curing and performance of the coating may be impaired.

If there is any doubt about the substrate or underlying paint film, apply the appropriate product to a small, inconspicuous area, allow to dry for 24 hours and then inspect for appearance and adhesion to substrate.

Wash brushes with a mild detergent solution, such as washing-up liquid, then rinse with clean water.

4. Trouble-shooting

If regular maintenance is delayed or damage has occurred, additional steps may be necessary to reinstate the finish to its original condition.

Where minor flaking affects small areas of the topcoat surface but the timber substrate is not exposed:

- Abrade the damaged area with a fine grade abrasive paper to remove all unsound coating and feather out to leave a smooth surface
- Clean down and wash the abraded area to remove dust, and allow to dry thoroughly
- Apply a coat of topcoat in the appropriate shade, colour and gloss level to the damaged area
- Allow to dry for four hours before applying a second coat
- If the damaged area is widespread, lightly abrade the complete frame, repair the damaged area as described above, and apply the second coat to the complete frame.

Where moisture has penetrated joints, end grain, or mitres, or where natural movement of the timber has opened shakes, treat as follows:

- Abrade the damaged area with a fine grade abrasive paper to remove any unsound coating and feather out to a smooth surface
- Clean down and wash the abraded area to remove dust, and allow to dry thoroughly
- Prime
- Seal any open joints with joint sealer applied by mastic gun. Wipe with a damp cloth or spatula to give a smooth joint and allow to dry to a clear finish
- Seal any exposed end grain with end grain sealer and allow to dry thoroughly
Apply a topcoat and allow to dry for four hours before applying a second coat.

5. Resin exudation

Resin occurs naturally in timber, in pockets within the wood or associated with knots. Some timber species are naturally more resinous than others, but the presence of resin is normally not detectable when joinery is manufactured.

Resin exudation often occurs on southern elevations and with darker colours, where the sun's heat liquifies and mobilises the resin, drawing it to the surface.

Where resin has exuded through the coating:

- Avoid trying to remove fresh sticky resin as it can be very difficult and its presence indicates the exudation is still continuing
- Wait until the first maintenance period, by which time the resin has dried and oxidised, forming a white crystalline powder
- Remove the dried resin with a stiff nylon or natural bristle brush
- Wash off any remaining residues with a cloth.

Water-based coatings often allow the passage of resin to the surface without damaging the coating. If the finish is not damaged by over-vigorous scrubbing during crystal removal, re-coating is often unnecessary. Otherwise an overall application of a finish coat restores the general appearance of the timber and maintains its protection.

6. Weather seals

Weather seals need no special maintenance apart from ordinary cleaning with a cloth and a solution of soap and water.

Ensure that the fitted weather seals do not become dislodged from their grooves. Should this occur, slide them back into position immediately to avoid damage when the window is closed.

If the weather seals are broken or damaged and you are able to feel a draught, ensure prompt repair or replacement by a competent person.



7. Glass care

Glass cleaning:

- Remove heavy external grime with a solution of soap and water
- Use a proprietary household glass cleaner with a soft cloth.

Glass unit replacement:

- The replacement of any sealed glass units must be carried out by a competent person in accordance with BS 6262
- The units themselves must be CE marked and conform to BS EN 1279 (or BS EN 12150 for toughened glass i.e. glass with an etched mark in the corner)

Condensation

After a frosty night, external condensation can form in the middle of the glass unit, when the external surface of the glass is colder than the air outside. Caused by the low-emissivity coated glass that reflects heat back into the room, it will disappear as the temperature rises during the day.

If there is condensation on the inside of the glass unit, it is a sign that the relative humidity in the room needs to be reduced. This can normally be reduced by improving air circulation. Building regulations require new windows in sensitive locations, such as kitchens and bathrooms, to be fitted with trickle vents.

8. Maintenance intervals

A surface coated with a factory-finished opaque system will normally last up to 10 years, depending on the degree of exposure and climate conditions.

Lighter shades (or white) will last longer than darker shades as they provide better protection from the sun's ultra-violet light.

Similarly, south-facing windows will need redecorating sooner than those less exposed to sunlight.

A surface coated with a translucent system will normally last up to 6 years, depending on the degree of exposure.

Coating type	Window position	Moderate climate: Non-coastal areas and ground floor	Hard climate: Within 1/2m of coast- line, second floor or above, or on a hillside	Extreme climate: High altitude or exposed coastal areas
White or light- coloured paint	Set back	10 Years	7 Years	7 Years
	On facade	8-10 Years	5-7 Years	4-6 Years
Dark-coloured paints and dark translucents	Set back	6-8 Years	4-6 Years	3-4 Years
	On facade	4-6 Years	4-6 Years	3-4 Years
Light translucents such as light oak and pine	Set back	3-4 Years	2-3 Years	1-2 Years
	On facade	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	1-2 Years

9. Warranties

Members offer industry-leading warranties on frames, coatings, glazing units, seals and hardware. Check warranty periods and terms and conditions with individual members.

Warranties may vary subject to exposure conditions (such as coastal environments).

Compliance with these guidelines will generally satisfy the terms and conditions of members' warranties.

Note: *Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of advice given, the federation cannot accept liability for loss or damage arising from the use of the information supplied in this publication.*

A list of Wood Window Alliance window and door manufacturers is available from <https://windows.bwf.org.uk/>

Use a window cleaner who is a member of the Federation of Window Cleaners' Safety Accreditation Scheme: <http://www.f-w-c.co.uk/>